

# GENE THERAPEUTICS

## Methods and Applications of Direct Gene Transfer

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## A HISTORY OF GENE TRANSFER AND THERAPY

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### INTRODUCTION

“Gene therapy” is generally thought of as a very new concept, but the notion that genes could be manipulated to treat human disease actually goes back several decades. Many of the pioneers of modern genetics realized that their discoveries eventually could lead to medical applications. Some even proposed gene transfer approaches decades ago that are still being explored today.

Perhaps the reason this history is little known is that progress in the science of gene therapy and transfer has been so slow in coming. However, the pace has accelerated in recent years, and many researchers are now embarking on clinical trials of very promising gene therapies. At this point, it seems useful to review the evolution of gene therapy’s theoretical underpinnings and thereby gain insights into its medical, scientific, social, ethical, and economic implications. This historical perspective may be particularly useful for evaluation of the “prior art” in patent applications.

Several reviews have discussed some of the more recent advances in gene therapy (Miller, 1992; Friedmann, 1989) and in nonviral gene transfer methods (Felgner, 1990). One of the early proponents for gene therapy has recently reviewed its history (Friedmann, 1992).

### GENETIC ENGINEERING

Since ancient times humans have bred animals and plants for specific purposes. We see the fruits of their labors when we eat corn, train a dog, race a horse, or smell a rose. Such selective breeding practices were the forerunners of the modern science of genetics, although the term “genetics” has come into use only relatively recently.

The “International Conference of Hybridization and on the Cross-Breeding of Varieties,” held in 1899 in London, later came to be known as the “First International Congress of Genetics” (Crow, 1992). William Bateson suggested the use of the term “genetics” at the Third Congress in 1906. In the interim, H. de Vries and others had rediscovered Mendel’s work, which originated the concept of the gene as a unit of hereditary.

One of the first uses of the term “genetic engineering” was in a paper of that name presented at the “Sixth International Congress of Genetics” held in 1932 in Havana, New York (Crow, 1992). The term was used to mean “the application of genetic principles to animal and plant breeding.” Nonetheless, Marxist commentators used the term “genetic engineering” for “eugenics” as contrast to the “social engineering” of the USSR (Lederberg, 1973).

## THE PHARMACEUTICAL TRADITION

The term “gene therapy,” coined in part to distinguish it from the somewhat Orwellian connotations of the term “human genetic engineering,” can be defined as “the application of genetic principles to the treatment of human disease.” Under this broad definition, the highly successful screening programs for phenylketonuria and Tay-Sachs disease could be included. Even many conventional medical and surgical therapeutic approaches, such as liver transplantation, might fall under this definition because they were founded on an understanding of their genetics and biochemistry, although they do not directly utilize genetic principles.

More specifically, however, the term “gene therapy” combines the concepts of pharmacotherapeutics with genetic principles. It implies the use of a substance to treat the disease state.

In 1878, Langley proposed the concept of the “receptor substance,” now known simply as the “receptor” (Goodman, 1975). The hypothesis that interactions between a drug and its receptor are governed by the law of mass action was further developed by A.J. Clark in the 1920’s. The molecular understanding of protein function and enzyme action led to development of rational drug design based on targeting the receptor, or active site (Perutz, 1992). Anti-sense and ribozyme gene therapies represent an extension of this concept.

Gene therapy approaches that involve gene addition or gene modification are conceptually similar to protein replacement therapies, such as those for diabetes mellitus and the hemophilias, in that a natural macromolecule of the human body is administered. Transient gene therapy approaches such as the use of artificial mRNA (Wolff, 1990) would also be similar to these protein replacement therapies. However, nontransient gene therapy approaches such as retroviral vectors differ in that the administered gene may be permanently incorporated into the cells’ chromosomes. In this sense, gene therapy also resembles surgery, in which a tissue or organ is permanently modified.

## THE GENE AS A PHYSICAL ENTITY

Avery, MacLeod, and McCarthy first showed that a gene could be transferred within nucleic acids (Avery, 1944). Their 1944 article begins with a sentence pertinent to gene therapy:

“Biologists have long attempted by chemical means to induce in higher organisms predictable and specific changes which thereafter could be transmitted in series as hereditary characters.”

The ability for viruses to transmit genes was first demonstrated in *Salmonella* (Zinder and Lederberg, 1952). The idea that viral genomes could become a permanent part of cell genomes (i.e., prophages) was first discovered with bacteriophages (Lwoff, 1972; Lederberg, 1956) and then extended to animal viruses. For example, the ability of the Rous Sarcoma Virus to transform cells in culture, which in turn could produce new virus, led to the idea that the viral genes were responsible for the cells’ transformation. Further studies of RSV infections in vitro led to the proviral hypothesis (Temin, 1976; Temin, 1971). Other studies demonstrated integration of SV40 viral DNA in SV40-transformed cells (Sambrook, 1968).

Watson and Crick’s discovery of the structure of DNA and its implication concerning DNA’s function had a revolutionary effect on biology (Watson, 1954). The history of the subsequent discoveries of mRNA and the formulation of the “central dogma” (genetic information flows from DNA to RNA to protein) is described in H. Judson’s classic book entitled, “The Eighth Day of Creation” (Judson, 1979).

## EARLY SPECULATIONS ON GENE THERAPY

Several key aspects of gene therapy were covered in a talk that Tatum gave in New York on May, 1966 (Tatum, 1966). One, that viruses could be used to transduce genes, is evident in his prediction that,

“Finally, it can be anticipated that viruses will be effectively used for man’s benefit, in theoretical studies in somatic-cell genetics and possibly in genetic therapy... We can even be somewhat optimistic on the long-range possibility of therapy by the isolation or design, synthesis, and introduction of new genes into defective cells of particular organs.”

He also speculated that since the basis of cancer is altered genes, treatment could be achieved “by modification and regulation of gene activities, or by means of gene repair or replacement.” Tatum also anticipated indirect or *ex vivo* approaches towards gene therapy:

“Hence, it can be suggested that the first successful genetic engineering will be done with the patient’s own cells, for example, liver cells, grown in culture. The desired new gene will be introduced, by directed mutation, from normal cells of another donor by transduction or by direct DNA transfer. The rare cell with the desired change will then be selected, grown into a mass culture, and reimplanted in the patient’s liver. The efficiency of this process and its potentialities may be considerably improved by the synthesis of the desired gene according to the specifications of the genetic code and of the enzyme it determines, by in vitro enzymatic replication of this DNA, and by increasing the effectiveness of DNA uptake

and integration by the recipient cells, as we learn more about the factors and conditions affecting these processes.”

He was extremely confident that gene therapy would be feasible, given our understanding of the structure and function of genes.

One of us speculated about the possibility of gene therapy in an October 24, 1962 letter to Stanfield Rogers:

“it will only be a matter of time, and perhaps not a long time, before polynucleotide sequences can be grafted by chemical procedures onto a virus DNA.”

These ideas were first published by Lederberg in a 1968 article that states,

“an attempt could then be made to transform liver cells of male offspring of haemophilic ancestry by the introduction of carefully fractionated DNA carrying the normal alleles of the mutant haemophilia gene. This experiment would appear to be entirely analogous to the typical attempts at transforming bacterial forms. However, it is not clear whether one should regard this as a pure example of genetic engineering, since the practical outcome would probably be best achieved by influencing the nuclear constitution of somatic tissues rather than by direct tackling of the germ line. The precedent for this type of intervention would be the virus-mediated transduction of genetic characteristics that was also demonstrated in bacteria almost twenty years ago. The proposal, recently revived by Dr. S. Rogers, would require the discovery or artificial formation of cryptic viruses to which specified genetic information relevant to the cure of a genetic disease has been grafted. These viruses would then carry that information into the requisite cells of the host. Once the essential techniques for grafting segments of DNA from different sources onto that of a microbe have been perfected, experiments along these lines provide the most favourable opportunity to select those segments of DNA information which are needed. In this way it should not be extraordinarily difficult to obtain microbial DNA packets which are enriched with the gene, for example, for the synthesis of phenylalanine hydroxylase. One may of course argue that similar results could be achieved by the manipulation of tissue cells in culture as if they themselves were micro-organisms.”

A. Kornberg’s successful replication of DNA in a test tube was widely reported in the popular press as the “creation of life in a test tube.” It sparked an article by Lederberg on gene therapy that was published in the *Washington Post* in January 13, 1968.

W. Szybalski (Szybalski, 1991; Szybalski, 1992) who performed one of the earliest mammalian gene transfer experiments (see below), stated at a presentation to the Poultry Breeder’s Round Table,

“When presenting our data at seminars and symposia in 1962-1964, we coined the terms ‘gene surgery’ and ‘gene therapy’ to stress the clinical potential of our work, but there was little interest in our results (except among poultry breeders),

probably because at that time prokaryotes, DNA synthesis, and the genetic code was the center of attention.”

By the late 1960’s and early 1970’s, gene therapy became the subject of an increasing number of articles and meetings. Sinsheimer speculated on the prospect for “designed genetic change” of mankind (Sinsheimer, 1969). At an autumn, 1969 meeting (Aposhian, 1970), Aposhian proposed the use of pseudoviruses derived from the mouse virus, polyoma. He saw gene therapy arising from the pharmaceutical tradition.

“If one considers the purpose of a drug to be to restore the normal function of some particular process in the body, then DNA would be considered to be the ultimate drug.”

In a 1970 *Science* article, B. Davis discussed human genetic engineering and explored the feasibility and ethics of several procedures, including somatic and germ cell alterations, cloning of humans, genetic modification of behavior, pre-determination of sex, and selective reproduction (Davis, 1970). One of his major points was that “control of polygenic behavioral traits is much less likely than cure of monogenic diseases.”

In 1971, a symposium on gene therapy was sponsored by the National Institute of Neurologic Disease and Stroke at the NIH and the Fogarty International Center (Publication, 1971). The first session entitled “Information transfer by mammalian viruses” included talks on recombinant SV40 viruses by D. Jackson and P. Berg and on RNA tumor viruses by H. Temin. The other sessions were entitled “Isolation of altered viruses with specific genes,” “Information transfer by DNA,” “Mammalian cellular systems,” and “Immunologic and medical aspects.” A discussion of gene therapy was offered in a 1972 *Science* article by Friedmann and Roblin (Friedmann, 1972). In 1976, gene therapy was the subject of another meeting sponsored by the New York Academy of Sciences (Morrow, 1976).

Obviously, then, the idea for gene therapy quickly occurred to several key researchers, once the basics of molecular genetics were established. However, despite these premonitions, Friedmann (Friedmann, 1990) observes that

“It has not always been quite so obvious as it is now that gene therapy is a rational and logically consistent approach to the treatment of some forms of human disease, from both the medical and scientific perspectives. Until fairly recently, the concept of gene therapy has been criticized by a sizable portion of the molecular biologic community as being remote and even improbable, possibly even unnecessary.”

## GENE TRANSFER INTO MAMMALIAN CELLS IN VITRO

Despite the unavailability of recombinant DNA and hybridization techniques, several studies attempted to demonstrate that mammalian cells were able to take up

Just as bacteria do. Several studies in the late 1950's and early 1960's demonstrated that cultured cells took up radioactive DNA (Sirotnak, 1959; Schimizu, 1962; Jartler, 1960; Mathias, 1962; Kay, 1961; Hill, 1970; Gartler, 1959; Krenkel, 1961; Rabotti, 1963; Azrin, 1961). Some of these studies also reentered the radioactive DNA into the nucleus of the cells.

The study of viruses has motivated several early efforts for transferring genes to mammalian cells. In the late 1950's and early 1960's, several studies demonstrated that naked, viral DNA or RNA can be infective when applied to cells. This was first discovered with plants and tobacco mosaic virus in 1956 and then quickly extended to poliomyelitis, Semliki Forest encephalitis, influenza and several other viruses in mammalian cells. These studies prompted a Science review article which discussed the infectious disease implications of these studies (e.g., "their release from infected tissues and resistance to antibodies may explain some anomalous conditions") (Herriott, 1961). The infectious entity presumed to be polynucleotides is obtained by phenol-extraction of the virus, was labile to nucleases, and was not neutralized by antibodies. For example, a phenol-extract of polio virus yields what produces plaque-forming poliovirus when injected into embryonated eggs (Mountain, 1959) or when applied to monkey kidney tissue cultures (Dubes, 1961) (Klingler, 1959) mouse embryo cells (Weil, 1961), or HeLa cells (Alexander, 1958).

Another series of studies explored the effect of viral RNA concentration, solution composition, and temperature to cause infections of Mengo encephalomyelitis mouse fibroblasts (Colter, 1957; Colter, 1961). They found that hypertonic saline and sucrose solutions increased the infectivity of the RNA. Another study also found that exposure of HeLa cells to hypertonic solutions increased the number of plaques formed from polioviral RNA (Koch, 1960). In 1960, it was reported that viral RNA uptake was enhanced by high concentrations of magnesium sulfate (M) (Holland, 1960). In 1961, Dubes and Klingler reported increased efficiency of polioviral RNA plaque formation with the use of calcium depleted cells and "poorly soluble substances" such as  $\text{CaHPO}_4 \cdot 2\text{H}_2\text{O}$  and  $\text{Cr}_2\text{O}_3$ ,  $\text{Al}_2\text{O}_3$ ,  $\text{CaCO}_3$ ,  $\text{BaSO}_4$ ,  $\text{Fe}_2\text{O}_3$ ,  $\text{MgF}_2$  (Dubes, 1961). A footnote reported that

infection is also facilitated by the fine cloudy precipitate, very probably a calcium phosphate, formed when phosphate-buffered saline is made by mixing its ingredients before sufficient dilution with water."

Several early studies reported increased uptake of cellular or viral polynucleotides by complexing them with various proteins. Amos found that the uptake of radiolabelled *E. coli* RNA by cultured chick cells was enhanced by complexing it with protamine (Amos, 1961). Other polycations such as streptomycin, spermine, and spermidine did not increase uptake but were observed to protect the RNA from RNase and caused precipitates to form in some formulations (Amos, 1961). Miller and Ludwig, in 1962, reported that calf thymus histone or protamine enhanced the infectivity of polioviral and Coxsackie B<sub>3</sub> RNA in HeLa cells but did

not protect the RNA from RNase digestion (Smull, 1962). Another study found that methylated albumin (a basic protein) protected DNA and RNA from nucleases and enhanced their uptake by HeLa cells (Cocito, 1962). Bensch and King's observations that L cells did not take up appreciable amounts of DNA but did phagocytose particles prompted them to incorporate DNA into particles (Bensch, 1961). Using the Feulgen stain, acridine orange, and radioactive DNA, they found that DNA complexed with charcoal or activated resin did not increase DNA's uptake. However, DNA incorporated into 0.5-50  $\mu\text{m}$ -sized, gelatin particles entered the cytoplasm and nucleus of the L cells. Much later in 1975, Farber and co-workers reported that cultured Chinese hamster lung cells took up more radiolabelled genomic DNA when complexed with polyornithine than with DEAE-dextran, 125 mM  $\text{CaCl}_2$ , latex spheres, spermine, polylysine, and polyarginine (Farber, 1975).

Several studies in the early 1960's reported changes in cellular phenotype by the transfer of foreign genes. Kraus reported in *Nature* in 1961 that bone marrow cells in culture from a patient homozygous for sickle cell disease expressed the normal  $\beta$ -globin polypeptide (per electrophoresis) when the cells were exposed to DNA from normal bone marrow cells (Azrin, 1961). Weisburger reported in the *Proceedings of the National Academy of Science* that the transfer of ribonucleoprotein (resistant to DNase but sensitive to RNase and trypsin digestion) from a normal bone marrow or spleen caused the expression of normal hemoglobin in sickle cell bone marrow and reticulocytes as determined by electrophoresis, column chromatography and peptide digests (Weisberger, 1962). Also in the *Proceedings* in 1962, Kantoch and Bang reported that they were able to transfer genetic susceptibility to mouse hepatitis virus infection between macrophages of two different mouse strains (Kantoch, 1962). In their discussion, they reported that this transfer was blocked by incubating the extract with DNase. In 1962, French workers reported that they could modify the karyotype of chicken cells by exposing them to cow DNA (Frederic, 1962). Another study noted increased survival of irradiated, L cells if they were exposed to DNA from nonirradiated L cells (Djordjevic, 1962). Several negative results concerning DNA transfer were reported as well in the early 60's. Mathias and Fisher attempted to transfer amethopterin resistance in mouse leukemic cells without success (Mathias, 1962). The exposure of donor, bone marrow cells to naked and gelatin-complexed DNA from the host bone marrow cells in isotonic and hypertonic solutions did not affect the success of bone marrow transplantation in mice (Floersheim, 1962). The premise was that transfer of histocompatibility genes would induce immunotolerance.

The development of cell lines containing defined enzymatic defects and selectable systems proved extremely useful in gene transfer studies and ushered in the modern era of gene transfer. W. and E. Szybalski developed HPRT-deficient cell lines and the HAT selection media. DNA isolated from HPRT+ cells was able to confer HAT-resistance to HPRT- cells. The DNA was transferred in a phosphate buffer containing spermine in order to bind the DNA and shield it from DNase activity (Szybalska, 1962). In Table I of their 1962 article, they showed a dose-dependent relationship between the amount of donor DNA and the number of

transformants. Subsequent experiments indicated that the spermine contained 30%  $\text{CaCl}_2$  and that the spermine could be replaced by  $\text{CaCl}_2$  when used with phosphate buffers. Precipitates were observed during these experiments. These later experiments with  $\text{CaCl}_2$  were reported in Table 2 of their paper in Proceedings of the 12th Annual Session National Poultry Breeder's Roundtable (Szybalski, 1963) (1963):

"It was noticed that only one of preparations of spermine was especially active in the transformation process. Addition of this spermine solution to the phosphate-buffered saline (PBS) resulted in clouding of the solution, both in the presence or absence of the transforming DNA and the cells. Since we found that the particular spermine preparation contained a high concentration of calcium, the precipitate was most probably the calcium phosphate."

Further chemical analysis indicated that the contaminant was in fact calcium (Szybalski, 1992). This finding was not widely disseminated because of the specialized nature of the publication in which it was reported, but Szybalski's early contribution to DNA-mediated gene transfer was recognized by Scangos and Ruddle in a 1981 review (Scangos, 1981). Also, in 1962, Bradley, Roosa, and Law used 8-azaguanine selection to demonstrate the cellular uptake of naked, genomic DNA (Bradley, 1962).

Despite these early observations concerning calcium phosphate precipitation, most workers used DEAE-dextran to transfer foreign DNA into mammalian cells as a result of a report by Vaheri and Pagano in 1965 that showed increased transfer of polio virus RNA with DEAE-dextran (Vaheri, 1965). This 1965 study compared the use of DEAE-dextran to that of hypertonic magnesium solutions. Burnett and Harrington also used DEAE-dextran to transfer polyoma virus DNA but indicated that this was not successful with adenoviral DNA (Burnett, 1968). Subsequently several other studies reported the successful use of DEAE-dextran. McCutchan and Pagano transferred SV40 DNA (McCutchan, 1968), Warden and Thorne transferred polyoma virus, (Warden, 1968), and Nicolson and McAllister transferred adenovirus 1 (Nicolson, 1972). Hill and Hillova produced infectious SV after non-infected cells were transfected using DEAE-dextran with DNA from Rous sarcoma virus infected cell (Hill, 1972).

It was not until the detailed study of Graham and Van Der Eb on calcium phosphate-mediated transfection that this technique became widely used and accepted (Graham, 1973). They systematically explored the use of calcium or magnesium ions for transfection and determined that co-precipitates of DNA, calcium and phosphate were necessary for efficient transfection. They also explored several parameters, such as pH (6.9-7.4), incubation times, confluency of cells (60-100%) and adenoviral and carrier DNA concentration, in a systematic fashion. Because of this and the reproducible, 50- to 100-fold increase in efficiency over DEAE-dextran, this study had a major impact on the field and is widely cited as the primary source for the "calcium phosphate transfection" technique. After their

initial publication in 1973, they modified the procedure further in 1974 (Graham, 1974).

## EARLY ATTEMPTS AT DIRECT GENE TRANSFER IN VIVO

Perhaps the earliest predecessor of a direct in vivo approach was the use of vaccines, which permanently modify the body's response to infection. Vaccination with attenuated viruses may be viewed as a form of gene therapy, especially since the viral genomes may persist long-term. The ease of administration, relative cheapness, and long-lasting effect of vaccines are ideal qualities to which proponents of direct gene therapy aspire.

Another idea for direct, in vivo therapy was the notion of treating bacterial infections by the injection of bacteriophages. While this therapeutic approach was discussed in Sinclair Lewis' novel *Arrowsmith*, there were several actual reports of its successful use in animals and humans (d'Herelle, 1926). The negative results of well-controlled studies (Boyd, 1944) and the advent of antibiotics stopped its further investigation. Interestingly, there have been some recent reports of its exploration in animals (Reynaud, 1992; Soothill, 1992).

Several early studies reported the direct transfer of polynucleotides into tissues in vivo and in situ. Rieke reported that peritoneal malignant and normal cells in the peritoneum took up radioactive DNA (Rieke, 1962). Rabotti reported the uptake of radioactive DNA into tumors in vivo (Rabotti, 1963), but the foreign DNA demonstrated no functional activity. Radioactive DNA injected intravenously or intraperitoneally in rodents were taken up by spleen and bone marrow cells (Hudnik-Plevnik, 1959; Hill, 1961). Other studies reported the uptake of labelled DNA by cells in mice in vivo.

J. Benoit et al. reported beginning in 1956 that Peking ducklings injected intraperitoneally with DNA extract from Khaki Campbell ducks exhibited characteristics of the Khaki Campbell ducks in terms of body and head size, and that these effects were passed onto their progeny (Benoit, 1960; Benoit, 1960). Much to the dismay of pâté manufacturers and Chinese chefs who were expecting a culinary breakthrough, these results in Ducks have never been reproduced.

The Benoit studies in ducks attracted enough attention to prompt several other investigators to attempt phenotypic modification by DNA transfer in other species. The injection of rat DNA from a pigmented rat into an albino rat did not produce any change in skin color (Perry, 1958). Two other studies also reported the inability to produce pigmentary studies in albino rodents by injection of DNA from a pigmented rodent (Bearn, 1961), (Holoubek, 1961). In addition, the intraperitoneal injection of DNA from a normal rat did not correct the hyperbilirubinemic state of the CNH strain (noted to be deficient in glucuronyl transferase) (Perry, 1958). In chickens, the injection of a "Tyrode" solution or DNA in the Tyrode solution into the blood stream of young chicken embryos did not cause any morphological changes but did cause teratogenic malformations (Martinovitch, 1962).

mice, another group observed that the intraperitoneal injection of DNA from breast cancers of agouti C<sub>3</sub>H mice but not DNA from other organs caused cytological changes in the livers of white mice (Leuchtenberger, 1958). Two different groups noted that injection of DNA from one mouse strain caused weak transplantation immunity against skin grafts but raised the possibility that contaminants may have been responsible for the effect (Haskova, 1958; Medawar, 1958).

In summary, the Benoit studies prompted many attempts to research DNA uptake by vertebrate cells. However, the study made the entire field of gene transfer into cells of higher organisms somewhat suspect (W. Szybalski, personal communication).

Other studies explored the ability of DNA to transfer the neoplastic state. In the early 1950's, it was reported that new tumors formed after injection of DNA from tumor cells into normal mouse tissues (Stasney, 1950), (Paschkis, 1955). One-third of rats subcutaneously injected with lymphosarcoma chromatin were said to have developed lymphosarcomas or leukemia, while approximately one-third of rats injected intrahepatically were said to have developed hepatomas. A subsequent report observed a similar phenomenon but concluded that it was the result of contaminating cancer cells (Klein, 1952). A 1958 report observed that the repeated, subcutaneous injections of herring-sperm DNA caused duodenal adenocarcinoma in two mice but this was not repeatable with a different batch of DNA (Meek, 1959). This report prompted a subsequent study that reported that repeated, subcutaneous injections of herring-sperm DNA caused intestinal carcinomas in cichlids (Stolk, 1960). The injection of *Drosophila melanogaster* DNA was also noted to be mutagenic in *Drosophila* (Fahmy, 1961). Only many years later was the phenotype for neoplastic transformation reliably transferred from mammalian DNA into cells in culture (Cooper, 1980; Shih, 1979). Nonetheless, several studies in the late 1950's and early 1960's reported neoplastic transformation by viral polynucleotides in vivo just as there was a flurry of reports at this time concerning the infectivity of viral polynucleotides. For example, phenol extracts of SE polyoma virus were able to cause infections and tumors in hamsters (DiMayorca, 1959). Also, phenol extracts of papillomatous tissue (Shope) of Cottontail rabbits, produced papillomas when injected into the skin of rabbits (Ito, 1960), (Ito, 1961).

The development of plasmid expression vectors, reporter genes, and better in situ detection systems prompted more recent attempts at direct, in vivo gene transfer. In 1983, large liposomes containing the rat preproinsulin gene within a plasmid were injected intravenously into rats (Nicolau, 1983). The injections caused a 30% decrease in blood glucose and a ~50% increase in blood insulin.

Another early study involved the injection of calcium phosphate-precipitated polyoma viral DNA into mouse liver and spleen along with hyaluronidase and collagenase (Dubensky, 1984). The investigators reported the presence of the polyoma DNA in the tissues and inferred that the viral DNA had to replicate. Similar studies were also done with polyoma DNA and proteoliposomes (Mannino, 1988).

Another study involved the intraperitoneal injection of calcium phosphate-precipitated plasmids containing chloramphenicol acetyltransferase (CAT), hepatitis B surface antigen, human growth hormone, or mouse preproinsulin genes (Benvenisty, 1986). The investigators observed some CAT activity, immunohistochemical staining for the hepatitis antigen, insulin RNA, and growth hormone RNA in livers injected with the respective plasmids.

## FIRST ATTEMPTS AT HUMAN GENE THERAPY

In the late 1960s, S. Rogers injected the Shope papilloma virus into patients with arginase deficiency, based upon his studies that indicated that the virus contained an arginase gene. His initial observation was that rabbit skin tumors induced by the Shope papilloma virus contained high levels of arginase activity (Rogers, 1963; Rogers, 1959). Since he did not find any arginase activity in normal rabbit skin, he concluded that the virus carried an arginase gene. He also reported that the virus induced a virus-specific arginase in fibroblasts from a patient with arginase deficiency (Rogers, 1973). A biochemical assay demonstrated increased arginase activity, and an immunohistochemical stain with anti-sera specific against the virus-specific arginase distinguished the virus-induced arginase from native arginase. Administration of the virus to animals caused no harmful effect and reduced blood arginase levels. However, other workers found arginase activity in normal skin (Rothberg, 1961; Orth, 1967). These other workers also showed that rabbit liver arginase and Shope had similar kinetic and antigenic properties and that papillomas induced by a carcinogen also contained arginase. They concluded that the Shope virus either induces arginase expression or leads to the preferential growth of cells with higher arginase activity. The final outcome to this controversy was that three siblings with arginase deficiency were injected with the Shope virus, without any effect on their arginine levels (Terheggen, 1975).

In a 1980 *Nature* report, Cline reported that DNA from a highly methotrexate-resistant Swiss 3T6 cell line (containing many copies of the DHFR gene) was calcium phosphate transfected into mouse bone marrow cells (Cline, 1980). The donor bone marrow cells had a different karyotype to distinguish them from the recipient bone marrow cells. The recipient mice were irradiated and treated with methotrexate before being injected with the transfected cells. After transplantation, the recipient animals were reported to have an increased percentage of marrow cells with the donor karyotype and increased DHFR enzymatic activity. A similar study was published in *Science* which used recombinant DNA containing the herpes TK gene in the pBR322 plasmid vector (Mercola, 1980). On the basis of this experimental data they attempted to calcium phosphate transfect the  $\beta$ -globin gene into human bone marrow cells, which were then transplanted into patients with thalassemia. Their clinical trial was criticized for both scientific and procedural reasons, and this led to Cline's censure by the NIH and by his university (Wade, 1980; Wade, 1981; Wade, 1981). As a result, the NIH decided that all

cal practice. Rather, gene therapy is an entirely new branch of medicine, one that could potentially revolutionize the way we treat human disease.

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